

THE JOB SEARCH FOR TECHNOLOGY MAJORS: INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT, AND COMPUTER SCIENCE



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KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN BEGINNING A JOB SEARCH

- Your resume and cover letter are the first impression you will make on an employer...think of them as “marketing tools” designed to sell an impressive product: YOU!
- Demonstrating critical thinking and attention to detail in writing your resume and cover letter is an indicator of the quality of your work performance as a future employee.
- Being able to communicate your qualifications on your resume is preparing you to communicate your qualifications during the interview.

PART I: INFORMATION FOR TECHNICAL MAJORS TO COMMUNICATE ON THE RESUME, COVER LETTER, AND IN THE JOB INTERVIEW

EMPHASIZE TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

Industrial Technology Majors: List courses taken in which you acquired technical knowledge, including Industrial Technology and possibly Computer Science courses, in the **EDUCATION** category of your resume. Also list business courses taken, including business technology and management courses.

Computer Science Majors: Instead of course titles, create a separate category called **TECHNICAL SKILLS**. List knowledge of programming languages, operating systems, applications and database systems, and platforms and hardware.

DON'T OVERLOOK NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS such as communication skills, the ability to work as part of a team, planning and organizational skills, creativity in developing design ideas, analytical skills in solving problems, etc.

MENTION CERTIFICATIONS AND/OR TRAINING received in your field whether computer-related certifications or certification for operation of machinery or equipment, or safety certifications.

INCLUDE EXPERIENCE/KNOWLEDGE OF SAFETY REGULATIONS if you have worked in industrial environments where safety procedures were mandatory. Also, describe how you ensured safety measures were taken.

MATCH YOUR RESUME TO THE EMPLOYER'S REQUIREMENTS. Pay attention to the job ad and what specific knowledge, skills, and experience the employer is seeking, and tailor your resume – and cover letter – accordingly.

ALL JOBS PROVIDE VALUABLE EXPERIENCE. Describe how all jobs you've held allowed you to develop skills, especially those sought by employers you are targeting. For example, part-time retail jobs or working construction translates into teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving/analytical skills, organizational skills, etc.

INCLUDE DETAILS AND QUANTIFY your experiences with #'s and %'s if possible – for example, # supervised, # trained, # of projects completed, % increase in productivity, sales, etc.

USE THE VOCABULARY OF YOUR FIELD. Some verbs include: developed, designed, implemented, resolved, assessed, analyzed, calculated, supervised, controlled, coordinated, managed, planned, programmed. Some nouns include: efficiency, productivity, occupational safety, operations, maintenance, project management, quality assurance/quality control, costs, estimates, schedules, inspections, documentation, permits, specifications.

CREDIT THE TEAM. As teamwork in technical fields is extremely important, list team-based accomplishments. For example: Contributed to..., Assisted in..., Collaborated with supervisors to..., Served on XYZ Committee for....

SHOW ACCOMPLISHMENTS. Think of what you did that went above and beyond your regular, required job duties. You may include an accomplishments statement at the end of your job descriptions on your resume, e.g.: "Recognized by supervisors for consistently producing high quality results...." "Commended for motivating and leading team in successful projects."

PART II: RESUME FORMAT GUIDELINES & RESUME CONTENT FAQ's

RESUME FORMAT GUIDELINES

AVOID ERRORS IN SPELLING, GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION. Errors are viewed by an employer as an indicator of your future work performance – i.e., that you will be careless or not attentive to detail.

KEEP RESUME ONE PAGE; AVOID TEMPLATES. Adjust margins to .7 inches and font size to 10 or 11 point. Headings can be 11 or 12 point; your name, 14 - 20. Times Roman, Arial, or Tahoma fonts are recommended. Resume templates can make the resume two pages unnecessarily. Instead, type it as regular document in Word.

CREATE A HEADER. It should include your name, address, phone, and email address. Do not include the word “resume,” or personal info such as age, marital status, ethnicity, etc. Your email address should be professional.

RESUMES THAT MUST BE TWO PAGES. If you have a lot of work experience, and/or involvement in student organizations, you may need a two page resume. On the second page put name and phone number in upper left corner, and “Page 2” in upper right corner. Paper-clip; don't staple. DO NOT put header from first page on second.

MAKE SURE YOUR RESUME IS “SCANNABLE.” If the resume is handed to employers at a career fair, the employer may scan it to store it in a computer database. A “scannable resume” avoids italics, underlining, shading, borders, and graphics. Acceptable formatting includes: Bold type, caps, bullets, and black ink.

DO NOT FOLD RESUME, COVER LETTER, OR OTHER APPLICATION MATERIALS. If mailing, use a Manila envelope. Use labels rather than typing, printing, or hand-writing addresses directly on the envelope.

RESUME CONTENT FAQ's

OBJECTIVE

Do I need an OBJECTIVE? What should it say?

Although it is optional, an objective can demonstrate “focus” in terms of your career goal and emphasize key skills.

- A career in Information Technology in which analytical, team work, and communication skills will assist the company in achieving its goals.
- To demonstrate strong organizational, technical, and communication skills in a Drafting/Design position.

EDUCATION

Is it important that my degree information is correct?

Yes – if an employer knows the correct title of your degree, and you don't, this is a negative reflection on you. Check degree information on the academic program's web site, your transcript, or ask your faculty advisor. Also, list your concentration and/or any minors.

Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology / Concentration in Supervision

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA December 2012 Overall GPA: 3.4

Associate of Applied Science, Industrial Technology; concentration in Drafting/Design

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA May 2013 Overall GPA: 3.25

Should I list courses completed? Class projects? Yes, list 6 – 10 course titles, not numbers, that support your career goals. List projects if they support your career goals, and/or highlight knowledge/skills developed. **Example:**

Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology; concentration in Supervision

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA May 2012 GPA: 3.4

Coursework Included: Industrial Supervision, Work Methods and Measurement, Production Planning and Controlling, Facilities Planning and Design, and Statistical Quality Assurance.

Special Course Projects: Participated in team project in which (describe projects' purpose/results).

Should I list my GPA?

Only if 3.0 or above. However, if your Overall GPA is less than 3.0, but the GPA in your major is above 3.0, you can list Major GPA only: **Major GPA: 3.0**. If both are above 3.0, you can list both: **Overall GPA: 3.0 Major GPA: 3.2**

Should I list every college/university attended, & courses completed if I didn't get a degree?

If you attended at least a year, or earned an Associate's Degree, then list this info (and degree information).

In what order should I list my EDUCATION info, if I've attended more than one college?

List most recent educational experience first, and other colleges attended in reverse chronological order (only list courses from other colleges if they support or enhance your career goals). **Example:**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Bachelor of Science, Engineering Technology; Construction Engineering Technology Concentration

Graduation Date: May 2013

Delgado Community College, New Orleans, LA

Associate of Applied Science, Architectural/Design Construction Technology December 2011

Should I list high school information? Only if you have accomplishments such as honors or officer positions in organizations, then, put this info in **ACTIVITIES & HONORS**, and indicate they were in high school.

SKILLS SUMMARY

Why include a SKILLS SUMMARY? What is the best format?

It directs the employer's attention to **KEY SKILLS** – that is, personality characteristics, and knowledge and experience acquired through courses, team projects, work experiences, and student organizations that relate to your career goals. Bullet skills statements and begin each with an **ACTION VERB** or a phrase such as "Knowledge of...", "Experienced in...", or "Responsible for..." Include technical and/or computer skills. Or, create a separate category called **COMPUTER SKILLS** or **TECHNICAL SKILLS** if you have numerous skills to list.

EXPERIENCE

You may create two **EXPERIENCE** categories: **RELATED EXPERIENCE**, in which you list work, internship, volunteer, and even leadership experience in student organizations that directly relates to your career goals, and **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**, in which you list other experience not directly related to your career goals.

Should I list every job held on my resume? In what order should I list jobs?

List only jobs held in college, unless you have professional experience. List jobs in reverse chronological order:

Electrician's Helper, 2012 - present

Southeast Electrical Services, Hammond, LA

(Put job description here)

Construction Helper, Summers, 2010 - 2012.

Assisted with various construction jobs during summers while enrolled in college.

What type of information should I include in my job descriptions?

Use present tense verbs for current jobs; past tense verbs for previous jobs. Include statement describing type of organization (its services, purpose, etc.) if name is not descriptive. List tasks performed, purpose, results, and accomplishments and numbers if possible (e.g., of employees supervised). **AVOID "I"** – start with **ACTION VERB** or phrase such as "Responsible for...", "Experienced In...", "Knowledge of..."

ACTIVITIES & HONORS (can be called Accomplishments, Community Service, or Professional Activities)

List extracurricular activities in which you participated while in college. These experiences allow you to develop key skills employers look for, such as **team work, communication, organization, and leadership skills**. **Example:**

National Association of Industrial Technology, 2012-present: Offices Held: Vice President, 2011-2012;

American Design Drafting Association, 20011-present; Dean's List, multiple semesters

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST – Should I list this statement? This is optional since employers will expect you to have a page listing your references. See **The References Page** on Page 7 below for more information

PART III: JOB SEARCH PREP

CAREER EXPLORATION & ASSESSMENT IN THE JOB SEARCH

Knowing what options are available to you prepares you to change directions if you aren't finding your ideal job. Career Services offers **Career Exploration and Assessment** online resources to assist you in:

- **Exploring options** - Make informed choices about careers to target in your job search.
- **Developing a resume** - Research current/past jobs for writing accurate, detailed descriptions.
- **Developing a cover letter** - Research job you're targeting and tailor your cover letter.
- **Preparing for an interview** - Learn job requirements so you can discuss how your knowledge/skills fit.

SIGI 3, O*Net, OOH, and What Can I Do With This Major?
Information on 100's of careers by job titles or search by your college major. See job descriptions, education/skills required, salaries, job outlook, etc.



JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

Upload your resume into Career Services' **LIONHIRE** online job search system and **FREQUENTLY CHECK** for:

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS: Sign up in **LIONHIRE** – OCI's held each Fall & Spring semester

JOB VACANCY POSTINGS: Year-round, for full-time and part-time jobs and internships

RESUME REFERRALS: Sent to employers - occurs automatically - there's nothing to check

Access **JOB BOARD LINKS** to view job vacancy postings - full-time, part-time and internships.

NOTE: On **JOB BOARD LINKS**, look at not only the Computer Science category and the Industrial / Engineering Technology & OSHE category links, but also the other links on this page, as technology jobs may be found in many types of fields and organizations.

For resume, cover letter, and references page assistance, review the samples in this guide, and email your documents for review to Career Services' Email Resume Review Service: careercounseling@selu.edu.

THE COVER LETTER

It is recommended that you accompany your resume with a cover letter tailored to the position and to the organization. A **Sample Cover Letter** is provided on Page 10 below.

- Use same header (contact information) for resume, cover letter, and references page.
- Use business letter format of: left margins, no indents, and the date, company address, and salutation.
- Keep to one page - margins .7 and font 10 or 11 point - same as for resume, references page.
- Salutation should be: "Dear Human Resources Director," "Dear Hiring Manager," or "Dear Search Committee Chair" if no contact name is listed in the job ad.

1st paragraph State how you learned of position, position title, and name of organization.

2nd paragraph Describe degree - mention what you learned in courses, team projects.

3rd paragraph State knowledge/skills acquired in work and extracurricular experiences.

4th paragraph Indicate knowledge of organization and why you want to work for them.

Final paragraph Suggest desire for an interview, and where and how you can be reached.

THE REFERENCES PAGE

A reference is a statement in support of your application by someone who can comment on your work or academic performance - a current or former supervisor, professor, coach, or organization advisor.

Reference information goes on a page separate from your resume, but with the same header, and the word REFERENCES underneath.

- **Do not** include a references page with your resume unless a job ad requests it. Bring copies of references page in a portfolio to the interview.
- Three to five references is an appropriate number to list. Always ask permission to list someone as a reference, and give them a copy of your resume to illustrate your qualifications.
- List each reference's name, current job title, place of employment (include city, state, and zip code – mailing address not necessary), and work telephone number (not personal unless given permission).
- If a reference no longer works at the organization, you may still list them - with their current job title and employer. In parentheses, state, "former Manager of XYZ, Inc." to illustrate former relationship.



PART IV: THE ART OF NETWORKING

Many job openings are discovered by interacting or networking with others to let them know you are looking for a job. Networking can range from a casual, unexpected encounter to a planned, organized meeting – so always be prepared. Remember that you are always “on” when job searching, so always conduct yourself in a mature, polished manner.

Think creatively when developing your network of contacts, and organize your list. If your contacts are not aware of any job opportunities within their employing organization, ask them if they can refer you to contacts they have – either within their organization, or employed in others. It's not only who *you* know, but who *they* know!

Provide networking contacts and references with a copy of your resume. They can refer to it when they discuss your hiring potential with an employer, and it enables them to speak more informatively about you.

Have you spoken to these contacts about your job search?

- Professors and advisors to student organizations.
- Fellow members of student or other organizations - college, volunteer, etc.
- “Personal professional contacts” - bankers, accountants, lawyers, ministers.
- Friends, acquaintances, neighbors; family and extended relatives.
- Former employers, current employers, customers. Most college seniors have part-time jobs, and employers expect you to look for a degree-requiring position as you near graduation, so it's acceptable to network with them.

Have you explored these resources for job opportunities?

- Career Services' **LIONHIRE** system, & **Job Board Links** page.
- Company web sites.
- Career fairs – company representatives and /recruiters.
- Newspaper classifieds (“Want Ads”).
- Temporary employment agencies.
- Professional associations: Their web site job boards.
- Professional associations: Their conferences - local, regional, national - have job fairs or job networking events.
- Send a thank you note to all in your network who have assisted you!
- Keep networking even after you land a job. You never know when you may need your contacts again.

Using Social Media in the Job Search: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.

Do's

Do update your profile regularly
Do join groups...selectively
Do get rid of digital dirt – indecent language, photographs, etc.

Don'ts

Don't badmouth your current or previous employer
Don't mention your job search if you're still employed
Don't forget others can see your friends

SAMPLE RESUME

Chad Russell

1256 St. James Drive, Covington, LA 70434
cdrussell@yahoo.com

(985) 620-0000

OBJECTIVE

A career utilizing my strong technical, critical thinking, and communication skills, with the opportunity to contribute to company growth and success while continuing to develop professionally.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Industrial Technology; Concentration in Automated Systems

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Graduation Date: December 2013 GPA: 3.5

Major Coursework Includes: Principles of Technology, Loss Prevention, Materials and Processes, Production Planning and Controlling, Work Methods and Measurement, Facilities Planning and Design, Industrial Supervision, and Statistical Quality Assurance.

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Strong communication and teamwork skills developed through coursework and work experience.
- Excellent time management skills with ability to coordinate projects and meet deadlines.
- Outstanding troubleshooting, problem solving, and analytical thinking skills.
- Organized, detail-oriented with strong follow-through in completing tasks and assignments.
- Dependable, honest, hardworking, and willing to assume increased responsibility.
- Computer skills include: CAD, Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate, Circuit City, Covington, LA, January 2012 - Present

- Supervise, train and motivate employees while instituting high performance standards.
- Initiate sales of electronic products. Effectively maintain store displays and inventory.
- Responsible for troubleshooting electronic and computer problems.
- Provide quality customer service and ensure customer satisfaction.
- Perform cash management duties and process sales transactions.

Construction Assistant, Greg's Construction, Covington, LA, October 2010 - December 2011

- Assigned work to employees, based on requirements and specifications of each construction job.
- Assisted in inspecting work progress, equipment, and sites to ensure safety requirements met.
- Assisted supervisor in training workers in construction methods, equipment, and safety procedures.
- Displayed an in-depth knowledge of materials and tools involved in multiple construction projects.
- Studied specifications in building plans to prepare project layout and determine materials required.
- Selected appropriate equipment needed for each construction job.

ACTIVITIES and HONORS

President's List, Spring 2012 and Fall 2012; Dean's List, multiple semesters

National Association of Industrial Technology (NAIT) member

Gamma Beta Phi Honor and Service Society member

SAMPLE RESUME

Alan Fussell

222 River Road, Apt. 16, Hammond, LA 70401
985-000-0000 Amh29@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To secure a challenging internship with opportunity to apply and further develop strong technology, teamwork, communication and creative problem solving skills.

EDUCATION

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science; Concentration in Information Systems
Graduation Date: May 2014 GPA: 3.6

COMPUTER SKILLS

Software

Strong knowledge base in Macromedia Dreamweaver, JASC Paint Shop Pro, Adobe Photoshop, Pinnacle Studio 9, Microsoft Office Suites, and installing and configuring all Microsoft Windows versions; proficient at using Adobe Acrobat, Norton Antivirus, Ad-aware, Macromedia Flash, Microsoft Windows, DOS, BIOS, along with driver installation and updating; experience with Java, C++, and HTML languages.

Hardware

Experienced in building new computer systems, replacing hard drives, disk drives, and other hardware components; knowledgeable in troubleshooting computer hardware problems.

COMPUTER EXPERIENCE

Technology Liaison, Office of Career Services, Southeastern Louisiana University, October 2013 – present
Oversee all computer-related systems and functions for the office, including hardware and software procurement and installation, trouble-shooting, and maintenance of 20 computers. Responsible for majority of all web design and management decisions for office's website. Create web- and email-based promotional materials to market job placement assistance services to students and alumni. Created template-based graphical system to email flyers to students.

Software Support Specialist, TC Technology / Money Trax Inc., New Orleans, LA, December 2012 – July 2013
Answered technical support calls. Assisted customers with problems encountered when working with Money Trax – a financial services industry software. Provided technical support at COW (Circle of Wealth) College, a yearly convention in downtown New Orleans for the benefit of all Money Trax users.

Manager, DC&C Computer Services, Ponchatoula, LA, April 2011 – November 2012
Monitored business to ensure needed services were provided in an efficient and effective manner. Supervised and trained new employees. Maintained inventory and books of business. Built new computer systems and designed software and network configurations for customers.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Culinary Staff, China Lotus Restaurant, Hammond, LA, October 2010 – Present
Prepare food following detailed guidelines to ensure all food meets high standards of quality. Work collaboratively as a team member in a fast-paced environment, creating new ways to operate kitchen and restaurant more efficiently.

HONORS & ACTIVITIES

President's List, Dean's List, Gamma Beta Phi, Association for Computing Machinery

David Bhattarai

10000 North Oak Street, SLU 10000, Hammond, LA 70402 (000) 000-0000 david.bhattarai@selu.edu

OBJECTIVE

Accomplished computer science college graduate seeking challenging software development career that offers opportunity to apply technical, analytical, communication, and team work skills towards an organization's success.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Computer Science - Minor in Mathematics

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY, Hammond, LA. Graduation Date: May 2013

Major GPA: 4.0, Overall GPA: 3.860

Coursework Includes: Machine Learning, Software Engineering I, Probability and Statistics, Data Structures, Database Systems, Applied Linear Algebra, Foundations of Discrete Mathematics, Calculus III

Computer Skills: Java, Android, PHP, C#, MATLAB, R, JavaScript, Python, LINUX, FORTRAN, COBOL, C++

WORK EXPERIENCE

Amedisys Home Health and Hospice, Baton Rouge, LA. Spring 2013 – Present

Software Developer Analyst – Mobile Technologies

- Conduct research on presently available mobile technologies
- Evaluate native and multi-platform frameworks

Southeastern Louisiana University. Fall 2011 – Summer 2012

Research. Dr. Aron Culotta. Department of Computer Science and Industrial Technology

- Assisted with research on natural language processing to infer user sentiment on Twitter trends.
- Analyzed Twitter user credibility to create focus groups for sentiment analysis.

Southeastern Louisiana University. Summer 2012 – Fall 2012

Internship. Center for Faculty Excellence

- Worked on web-based rubric system to speed up the process of new course approval.

Southeastern Louisiana University. Spring 2010 – Spring 2011

Research. Dr. Sanichiro Yoshida, Department of Physics and Chemistry

- Wrote programs to analyze the interferometric data of metal under stress.
- Published work in "Optical Measurements, Modeling, and Metrology 5" (2011). Pages: 75-81.

Danfe Labs. Spring 2012 – Present

Android Application Developer. Amit Regmi. Chief Technologist.

- Developed and tested various COCOS2Dx games and native Android applications.
- Published 'NepNews', a Nepali News aggregator, in Google Play Store.

CLASS PROJECTS

VODOAT: Developed a parking lot monitoring system using image processing and machine learning. Used Support Vector Machine to predict vehicle occupancy. Manipulated and normalized data samples for consistency throughout system. *Skills used:* Machine Learning, Image Processing, Python, PHP and JavaScript.

KeepNEye: Developed C# motion detection application to alert user in case of a security breach. Ability to stream live video and control remote web-camera from any Android device. *Skills used:* Software Design, C#, Android and Java.

Musical Pattern Recognizer: Used Machine Learning techniques to find out and visualize patterns in popular music. *Skills used:* Clustering algorithms, Discrete Fourier Transformation, Python and MATLAB.

High Speed Photography: Built custom hardware configuration to trigger camera from a collection of active sensors. *Skills used:* Hardware programming, electronic circuits and C#.

AWARDS and ORGANIZATIONS

President's List (Fall 2009 – Present); Dean's List (Fall 2009 – Present); Progression Scholarship (Fall 2010 – Present); Star Grant (Fall 2011); Guitar Club; Nepali Students at Southeastern

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Alan Fussell

222 River Road, Apt. 16, Hammond, LA 70401
985-000-0000 Amh29@gmail.com

February 25, 2014

Louisiana State University
Position: Information Technology Specialist
Office of Computing Services

Dear Search Committee Chair:

Please accept this letter and resume as my application for the Information Technology Specialist position advertised on the LSU Human Resource Management web site. I am seeking a position that will benefit from my technical and team work abilities, as well as my strong knowledge base in information systems.

I will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Southeastern Louisiana University in May 2014. My coursework has provided an excellent foundation in (state areas of knowledge you possess, especially areas that pertain to the job targeted).

Additionally, my work experiences have allowed me the opportunity to successfully apply what I have learned in the classroom to real-world situations. As a Technology Liaison with the Office of Career Services at Southeastern, I have applied my knowledge of both software and hardware to maintain optimal functioning and operation of technology to support the office's technological mission and goals, overseeing 20 computers. I was also responsible for the office's web site design updates, as well as for developing graphic design promotional emails informing students about the job search services offered. As a Software Support Specialist, I demonstrated strong communication and problem-solving skills in addressing customer concerns. As a manager for a computer services business, I applied analytical and creative thinking skills in building computer systems and designing software and network configurations for customers.

In researching (name of company/organization), I discovered that (mention positives you've learned regarding their mission, goals, future initiatives). I understand the position requires (state some aspects of the job from the job ad in which you are competent). With the accumulation of this information, I am confident that the combination of my education, experience, and skills will allow me to successfully meet your organization's expectations of commitment to excellence.

Attached is my resume, I look forward to an interview and opportunity where we may further discuss my qualifications and desire for employment in your professional environment.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Alan Fussell

SAMPLE REFERENCE PAGE

Chad Russell

1256 St. James Drive, Covington, LA 70434 (985) 620-0000

cdrussell@yahoo.com

REFERENCES

John Smith, Manager
Circuit City
Covington, LA 70433
985-555-0000

Greg Jones, Owner/Manager
Greg's Construction
Covington, LA 70433
985-000-9999

Dr. John James, Associate Professor
Dept. of Computer Science & Industrial Technology
Southeastern Louisiana University
Hammond, LA 70402
985-000-0000

PART VI: THE JOB INTERVIEW

TOP TEN INTERVIEW TIPS

Do your homework. Research the organization beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and help you formulate intelligent questions to ask.

Know where you're going. Make sure to find out where the office is and how to get there. Do you know how long the trip will take? Do you have the name and phone number of the person you'll be meeting with? Do you know how easy it is to park? Save yourself time and unnecessary stress by preparing.

Look the part. Clothing should be neat, pressed, and professional. As it can be difficult to know the culture of the work environment beforehand, err on the side of conservative. Even if everyone's wearing jeans when you arrive, you're still better off wearing a suit. Still, inject some personality into your look, and don't neglect the details.

Bring necessary documentation. Bring extra copies of your resume, a references page, and a portfolio of samples of relevant professional work, in a nice "padfolio." Recent college graduates should also bring their transcripts.

Arrive early. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview. Visit the restroom and check your appearance in the mirror. Introduce yourself to the receptionist to let them know you have arrived and that you have an appointment. *Turn your cell phone off so it doesn't ring during your meeting.* DO NOT TEXT while waiting for the interviewer.

Allow for handshake. Pause a moment upon greeting the interviewer to allow them to initiate the handshake. If they do not, you may initiate it.

Sell yourself. Develop a 30-second sales pitch that sings your praises. In business this is called an "elevator speech," a compelling overview of *why you?* that can be recited in the time it takes to ride the elevator. It should include your strengths and abilities, and what sets you apart from other applicants.

Exhibit positive body language. Make and maintain eye contact. Show enthusiasm for the job, the company, and the information you are learning and sharing. Be a good listener, also, and be alert to cues you've talked enough.

Don't neglect to ask questions. Based on your earlier research, ask how the responsibilities of the position relate to the company's goals and plans for the future. Ask what qualifications they are seeking in candidates.

Follow up: ALWAYS return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy can leave the door open for other opportunities with the organization in the future. The message on your voicemail should be professional, and always answer the phone in a professional and positive tone of voice. Send a Thank You note or email – see below.

RESEARCH COMPANY AND JOB BEFORE INTERVIEW

Study the job ad and research the job on **SIGI 3**, **O*NET**, **OOH**, to effectively communicate your qualifications!

Research the company/organization web site to learn about:

- Products or services; key competitors
- Principal locations and subsidiaries/branches, etc.
- Company mission and vision statement
- Organization structure – by services, product lines, functions, etc.
- Types of /numbers of customers/clients
- Successes; your positive experiences with products or services
- Items in the news about the company
- Methods of training, evaluation, and promotion

PART VII: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Responses should be two to three minutes in length – practice aloud to time yourself.

Tell me about yourself.

Focus on highlights of your educational and work experiences. Start with recent accomplishments such as getting your degree and describe what you learned in your course work that pertains to the job. Discuss related work, internship, and student organization experiences. Describe knowledge and skills acquired in these experiences, and how they will contribute to your success on the job. Develop a “closing statement” - state how excited you were to learn of this career opportunity and that you believe your qualifications are an excellent fit. Do not disclose personal information such as age, marital status, number of children - these factors are not related to your ability to perform the job.

Which college course or courses have you enjoyed the most, and why? The least? Why?

For courses liked the most, discuss those that allowed you to develop knowledge/skills that fit the job. Or, choose courses that allowed you to grow, e.g., to develop critical thinking skills or to view things from different perspectives. For courses liked the least, choose one that **does not** pertain to the job. Explain why you disliked it but end on a positive note: “Although I didn’t have an interest in algebra, the course allowed me to improve my critical thinking.” “While I didn’t have an interest in the course, I viewed it as a challenge, applied myself, and made a good grade.”

Name your three greatest strengths.

Don’t hesitate in responding to this question. Name your strengths, and go ahead and elaborate by providing examples of how you use these strengths in your college or work life. The interviewer may ask another form of this question: “Name **three words** your co-workers would use to describe you.” Choose characteristics that relate to work.

What is your greatest weakness?

Design your response so that your weakness is really a “positive” in disguise. For example, you may say you take great pride in the quality of your work, so you tend to want to do it all yourself but then find you are not managing your time or delegating effectively. Describe what you have done to correct this. Or, address this question from a personal or professional growth perspective, such as stating that public speaking was an area in which you did not have confidence, but that you decided to improve through class presentations. Describe techniques you used to improve. NEVER choose a weakness that’s part of the job - do not use the public speaking example for a sales position!

What have you learned from extracurricular activities?

If you were an officer, or even just served on committees in student organizations, discuss these experiences and what they taught you (team work, leadership, communication, ability to plan, etc.): “I worked as part of a team, and learned about the management and budgeting processes involved in coordinating a fundraising event for our organization....”

Which of your work experiences has been most rewarding? Why? Least rewarding? Why?

Again, relate work experiences to the requirements of the job. You may want to say that your **internship** was the most rewarding, because it provided you with knowledge and skills directly related to this job, then elaborate. For the “least rewarding,” NEVER say anything negative about an employer. Indicate you learned something from each job held.

Tell me about your experience working with _____.

Be able to provide examples of how you have applied knowledge of technologies, systems, materials and processes that you learned in the classroom, to real world environments such as through class projects, internships, and/or work experiences. Describe this in terms of addressing a problem or challenge, how you approached it and analyzed it, what you actually did, and what results were achieved.

In what ways do you uniquely contribute to a team effort?

Research the definition of team work so you can begin to answer this question by describing the elements required for a successful team effort. For example, stating that you believe all team members have something to contribute could be part of your “philosophy of successful teamwork.” If you have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), there is online information on the teamwork abilities. Answer along the lines of the following options, and if possible, give a specific example to support your statements:

I’m a very organized person, and I usually assume the role of the person keeping the team on track. I write down everyone’s name and the tasks they are assigned for the project. I make sure everyone knows what their tasks are. I also develop a timeline of everyone’s tasks and even a breakdown of the steps for each member’s assigned tasks, and due dates for those. I also try not to come across as a drill sergeant, however! I let everyone know organization is my strength and that I’ll be happy to take on the role of timeline coordinator for the project.

Or

I tend to be the team member who tries to make everyone feel they are a part of something worthwhile, and that they each have something to contribute. I love hearing everyone’s thoughts and enjoy encouraging them to think out and voice their ideas. I like making all of the team members comfortable so no one feels intimidated. For those that are somewhat shy, I encourage them to speak up, or I’ll tactfully ask them if they would like to be in charge of a certain task.

Describe your leadership style.

This statement may be offered primarily for management positions; however, be prepared: Think about situations in which you exercised leadership, steps/actions you took as a leader, and positive results of those efforts – e.g., leading a class team project or student organization activity, training new employees, setting an example of professionalism. Think in terms of guiding and motivating **people** AND managing **tasks** – both crucial elements of leadership. Even if the job does not require you to supervise others, still view yourself as a leader of your area of work responsibility.

Do you work well under pressure?

Answer in the positive: “Yes, I work very well under pressure. In fact, pressure can generate a certain energy that can be a force for getting things done.” However, this question is also used to learn about your ability to manage your time effectively, to multitask, to organize and prioritize. Explain that you plan, organize, and complete your tasks so that if the unexpected occurs, you will not have a lot of unfinished business to prevent you from meeting the deadline.

Describe the ideal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate.

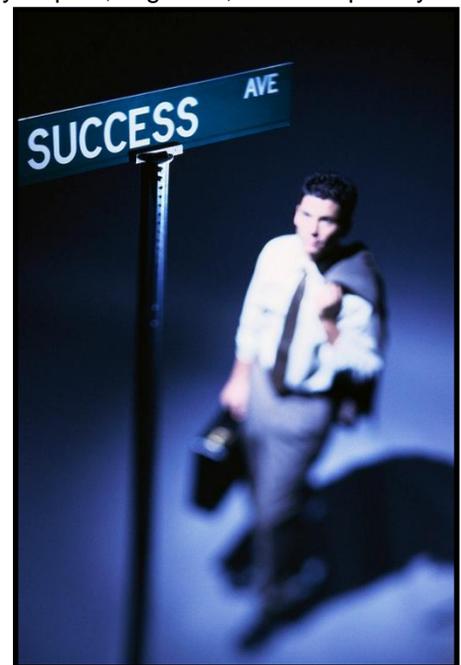
Answer this question from both a supervisory perspective - with yourself in the role of supervisor, even if you have not had such an experience - and from that of a subordinate. Describe the approach you would take if placed in a supervisory position, and elaborate on your leadership and team work styles. DO NOT compare “good supervisors” you’ve had to “bad supervisors” or criticize the management or operations of an organization.

Why do you have a gap in employment from _____ to _____?

College students can explain a gap in employment as a decision to spend time focusing on their studies.

Describe an accomplishment, and how you achieved it. What does “success” mean to you?

Choose something that illustrates setting a goal, and commitment to achieving that goal. Provide an example from college, work, or extracurricular activities. Describe the process and what you learned “along the way.” Or, describe an obstacle you overcame, a challenge you met successfully. Regarding “your definition of success,” this question has more of a philosophical intent; let your response reflect your attitudes, beliefs, and values about life and work.



Where do you see yourself five years from now? What are your career goals?

DO NOT describe career goals which will take time and energy from your new job, such as pursuing an advanced degree right away. And do not leave the employer with the impression that they are a “stepping stone” to your ultimate career goal with another organization or another type of work. Instead, emphasize your strong desire for a career path with this company. If you are **not** certain you want to work for them, keep your response general: “I’m looking for the opportunity to continue to develop professionally and to advance based on my contribution to an organization’s goals.”

What do you know about our company/organization? Why do you want to work here?

DO YOUR HOMEWORK in researching the company/organization THOROUGHLY before interviewing. Know something about their mission, products, services, clients/customers, history, future initiatives. This information can be found on the company/organization web site and additional online research.

What can you bring to this position that would “set you apart” from other applicants?

This question presents an opportunity for you to highlight what you have to offer as it relates to the position and the company. Also prepare for this question by carefully listening to the interviewer describe the position, the company, and the qualifications sought, which will likely occur during the interview.

APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

Refrain from asking these questions until the interviewer asks if you have questions (usually at the conclusion of the interview). However, if you do not understand a question you are asked during the interview, you may ask the interviewer to explain. DO ASK QUESTIONS to show interest and initiative!

- What qualifications do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?
- Can you describe the training period/program? How would I be supervised/my performance evaluated?
- Could you describe a typical day? Week? The organizational culture?
- What are the opportunities for advancement? (if you can’t determine from research)
- Does the company encourage participation in professional organizations? Continuing education?
- When can I expect to hear from you regarding your hiring decision? (they will likely tell you this, however)

INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

- DO NOT ask about salary or benefits during the first interview. However, be prepared to voice a range you’re looking for if they ask – see **SIGI 3, O*Net, OOH** for salary info on 100’s of careers.
- DO NOT push for an early decision by mentioning the other opportunities you have awaiting you.
- DO NOT ask for feedback on your interview performance.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

“Behavioral” questions probe applicants’ past behavior in work situations, on the premise that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. Think of three or four challenging or problem **situations**, how you **assessed** them (perspectives considered), **actions** you took to resolve or improve it, and the positive **results** of your efforts.

To help you understand and respond to behavioral interview questions, make a list of your “three greatest strengths” and provide an example of how you successfully applied each strength in an academic, work, or extracurricular setting.

Skills employers seek, and BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS addressing each skill:

Communication

- Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with a customer/client.
- Have you ever had to “sell” an idea to your co-workers or a group? How did you do it? Did they “buy” it?

Decision Making & Problem Solving

- Give an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision.
- How did you make the decision to come to Southeastern and to major in _____?

Motivation/Leadership (of yourself and others)

- Give an example of how you motivated your co-workers or classmates, as for a team project.
- Tell me about an important goal that you set in the past, that you successfully reached.

Interpersonal Skills

- What have you done in past situations to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual you've worked with, and how you worked with them.

Planning and Organization

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.



Other Possible Interview Questions

- How did you become interested in the field of _____?
- Do you prefer working with others or alone?
- What energizes you on the job? What stresses you?
- What are some things you've learned in college that could help you do this job?
- Give an example of where you had little or no direction in solving a problem and how you handled it.
- Give an example of how you showed initiative or creativity in problem-solving.
- What would you consider to be your greatest challenge in this job? Your greatest strength?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Thank You Note: Don't forget to send a handwritten note or an email within two days thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration, as well as restating your interest in the position.

Self Evaluation: Conduct a self- evaluation, noting both positives and difficult questions encountered.

Follow-up Calls: You may call if you haven't heard from the employer within the time frame you were given to expect a response. Always return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy leaves a positive impression for future opportunities with the company.

July 9, 2014

SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE

Dear Mr. Harris:

Thank you for the interview for the Information Technology Specialist position. This position offers opportunities which strongly match my interests and career goals. The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of your organization, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you and in making a valuable contribution to technology services at LSU.

Sincerely,
Alan Fussell

PART VIII: DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Always dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual. It is appropriate to ask, when you are called for an interview, how you should dress. If you are told “casual,” women should still wear a minimum of a jacket and slacks, and men should wear a minimum of a long-sleeved shirt and tie, with dress slacks or khaki pants.

NOTE: Surveys indicate that a majority of employers prefer **not** to see body art – tattoos, piercings. So cover up! Once hired, you can ask about the company dress policy regarding clothing, body art, hair length, etc.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS - FOR WOMEN

The Suit

- A business suit – matching jacket and skirt – is **most** appropriate – not a dress!
- Pantsuits are acceptable except for conservative employers, e.g., banks and accounting firms
- Should be conservative color – solid or small pattern – black, navy, gray, brown, taupe
- Should fit – not too tight or too loose; avoid fabrics that wrinkle easily, such as linen
- Blouse should be conservative to medium color – not bright color
- No short skirts – hem should be just above knee or just below

The Shoes and Hosiery

- Closed toe **ONLY!** No sandals – even those with heels; conservative colors – no gold, silver, red
- No “spiked” heels – should be comfortable for walking: heels should be 1 inch to 2 ½ inches high
- Neutral colored hosiery only: taupe, off black, navy, off white – avoid textures

The Jewelry, Make Up and Hair

- Seven pieces of jewelry maximum – count gold or jeweled buttons as jewelry
- One earring per ear – should be small, not dangling; watch – dress, not sports
- Go easy on the blush, eye shadow and lipstick; wear little or no perfume
- If hair is longer than shoulder length, wear pulled back from face

The Accessories

- Carry either a purse or briefcase – but not both – should be neutral color
- A nice portfolio containing a note pad and extra copies of your resume and references page may be carried along with your purse; carry nice pen

DRESS FOR SUCCESS - FOR MEN

The Suit

- Always wear a suit! Expensive is not necessarily better – should be proper fit
- Medium to dark colors, solids or conservative stripes
- Tip of jacket sleeve should fall 5 inches above tip of thumb when thumb is extended down
- Shirt: pastels, solids, conservative stripes; sleeves extend one half inch below jacket sleeve edge

The Socks, Shoes, and Tie

- Socks nice, thick material; dark, solid or small pattern; hide leg hair when legs are crossed
- Shoes should be leather; should be lace-up or dressy loafer; should shine
- Tie in small, repetitive pattern or solid – no “theme” ties (e.g., “Tabasco”)
- End of tie should touch top of belt - should contain loop in which to insert small end of tie

The Jewelry, Hair and Accessories

- Wedding band/watch is sufficient; wristwatch should be dress, not sports
- Hair should be “business cut” – short and neat; long hair for males is discouraged
- Face should be clean-shaven; if beard, keep short and neatly trimmed; use aftershave sparingly
- Carry nice portfolio containing a note pad and extra copies of your resume and references page; carry nice pen